



BRULE RIVER STATE FOREST MASTER PLAN FACT SHEET

Aesthetic Management

Current Management

The 1979 Master Plan provided for aesthetic management in several zones. These zones include lands within 400 feet of Lake Superior, the Brule River, and developed recreation areas. Aesthetic management zones also include lands within 200 feet of state and county highways, and several town roads. Management within these zones is defined in the DNR's Aesthetic Management Handbook¹, which basically says that aesthetics is the primary consideration, but does not rule out timber cutting. In addition the department has agreed to not clearcut in these zones except in very limited and specified situations. In addition to the Aesthetic Zones, the 1979 Master Plan describes Natural Areas, Wild Lakes, Historical Areas, and Endangered Species Sites, with special restrictive management guidelines.

From the development of the 1979 Master Plan to the present time the DNR has implemented aesthetic practices beyond what is prescribed in the plan. For example, individual leave trees and clumps of leave trees have been left in clearcut areas to improve the aesthetics and provide habitat for some wildlife species as well as provide a seed source for desired trees. Red pine thinnings are designed to minimize the "row" effect. Reforestation efforts have graduated to a more natural method rather than the furrow and plant methods previously used. In some instances trees of a desired species were planted to establish a seed source rather than for timber production.

Also, in the time between the implementation of the 1979 Master Plan and the present the amount of clearcutting compared to the amount of selective type of harvesting has decreased as a result of two factors. 1. The mature aspen stands in great numbers previously have been substantially harvested. The large acreage of aspen has developed into smaller more diverse stands with a better developed understory in many cases. And 2. The DNR is responding to the increasing public demand for managing with a softer touch and more like nature would produce by itself. At the same time there are still intensively managed areas such as grassland habitat, ponds, and aspen management areas which are maintained specifically for wildlife habitat.

¹ WDNR Publication: Forest Aesthetics – Management Considerations and Techniques
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